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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF/SPG
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/09/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: FEW BRIGHT SPOTS IN EASTERN SUDAN

REF: A. 08 KHARTOUM 1557
[1](#)B. 08 ASMARA 361

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: A group of eastern Sudanese lawyers and political activists, all past participants of the Peacebuilding Center for the Horn of Africa (PCHA) workshop series, expressed concern over the faltering implementation of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA). They said the GOS has criminalized any dissemination of copies of the agreement or public discussion of it. Earlier activists have been lulled into complacency by the salaried but powerless positions provided for by the ESPA. As a result, the new generation of activists is eager for the opportunity to learn about politics and governance outside of Sudan. End Summary.

WHAT PEACE AGREEMENT?

[1](#)2. (C) The ESPA was intended to include more eastern Sudanese representation in the GOS and called for an elimination of "political, economic, social, and cultural marginalization" of eastern Sudanese peoples. Two lawyers, Ms. Sumaia Ali and Ms. Khansa Ahmed, reported that not only had no progress been made in the implementation of the agreement (ref A), but also it was considered criminal to distribute copies of it or to discuss the agreement's details in public. Even in influential or educated circles, the details of the ESPA are not well known. Political education workshops are non-existent and to organize one would be a threat to personal safety.

PREVIOUS LEADERS SELL OUT THE CAUSE

[1](#)3. (C) Two young political leaders (Issam from the Sudanese Communist Party and Haytham from the SPLM) also expressed dismay at former activists who were "bought out" by token political positions. According to Haytham, the GOS assigned only a handful of positions to members outside of the National Congress Party. All of these positions are devoid of real power or influence. Additionally, the few eastern Sudanese who gained employment under the ESPA became comfortable and complacent, and did not use their new status to lobby for continued improvements. As a result, eastern Sudan lost many once-eager activists willing to take up the fight for equality.

POLITICAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE OF SUDAN

¶4. (C) With the situation bleak, the small group affirmed the need for political education if the agreement is to have any chance of success. It is not always easy to travel outside of Sudan, some of them admitted. If border officials become suspicious of large groups traveling together, the borders close altogether and authorities seize identification documents, sometimes indefinitely. Nonetheless, the participants remain determined to attend whatever political education opportunities are available, particularly the USG-funded PCHA workshop series (ref B).

MCMULLEN